FEATURES

# Top 10 most checked out books of 2024 at Winchester Public Library

NELL ESCOBAR COAKLEY | STAFF WRITER

December 26, 2024 . 6:00 AM — 8 min read

What are the Top 10 books that have been checked out at the Winchester Public Library this year? See our list below! COURTESY PHOTOS

As 2024 wraps up, you might be looking for a way to spend those snowy days. What's better than a book? And the Winchester Publi

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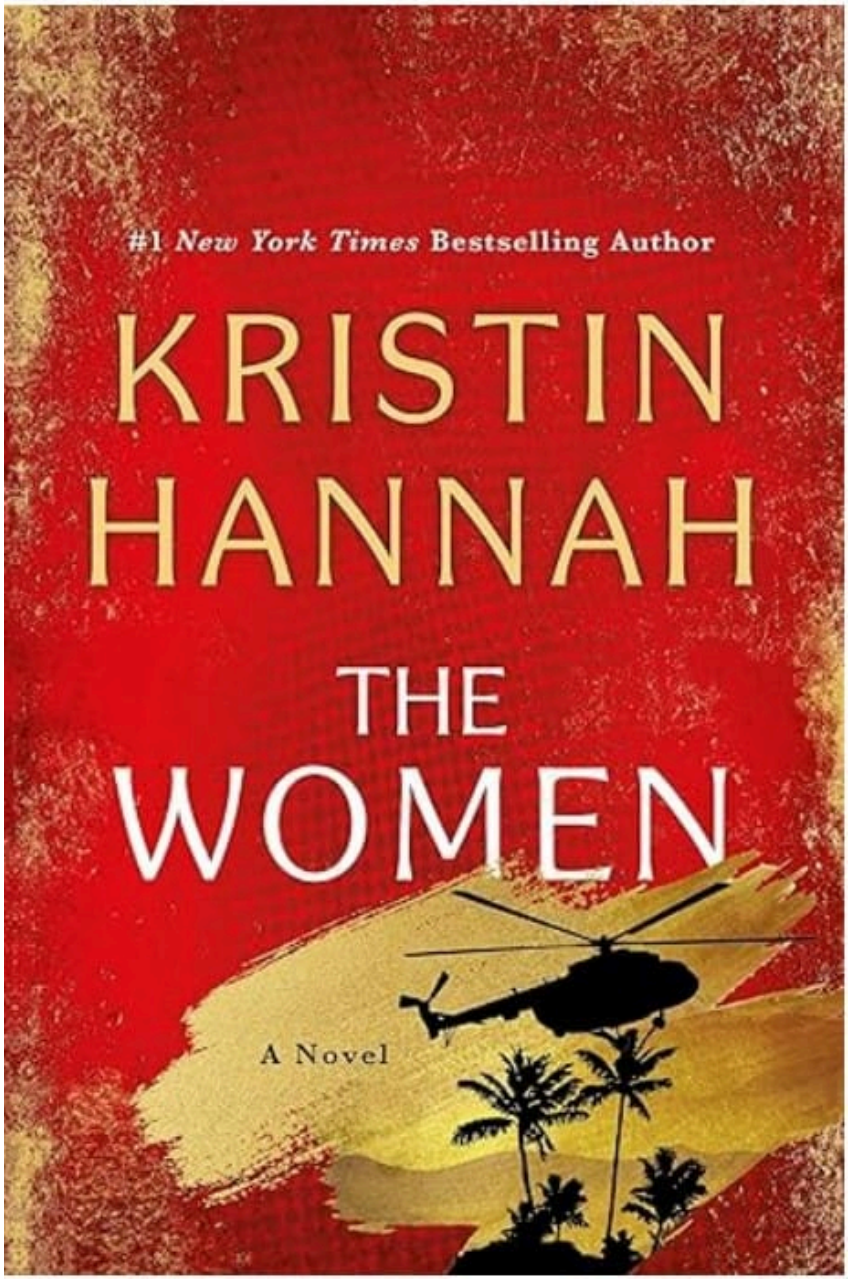
has just what you're looking for.

Nicole Langley, WPL director, said from Jan. 1 to Nov. 30, 2024, the library saw 551,597 checkouts. This includes physical materials as well as Overdrive ebooks and audiobooks.

The following are the Top 10 most requested titles by Winchester patrons in the same time frame.

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**1) "The Women" by Kristin Hannah**

“The Women” is the story of one woman gone to war, but it shines a light on all women who put themselves in harm’s way and whose sacrifice and commitment to their country has too often been forgotten.

A novel about deep friendships and bold patriotism, “The Women” is a richly drawn story with a memorable heroine whose idealism and courage under fire will come to define an era.

*471 pages, published Feb. 6, 2024*

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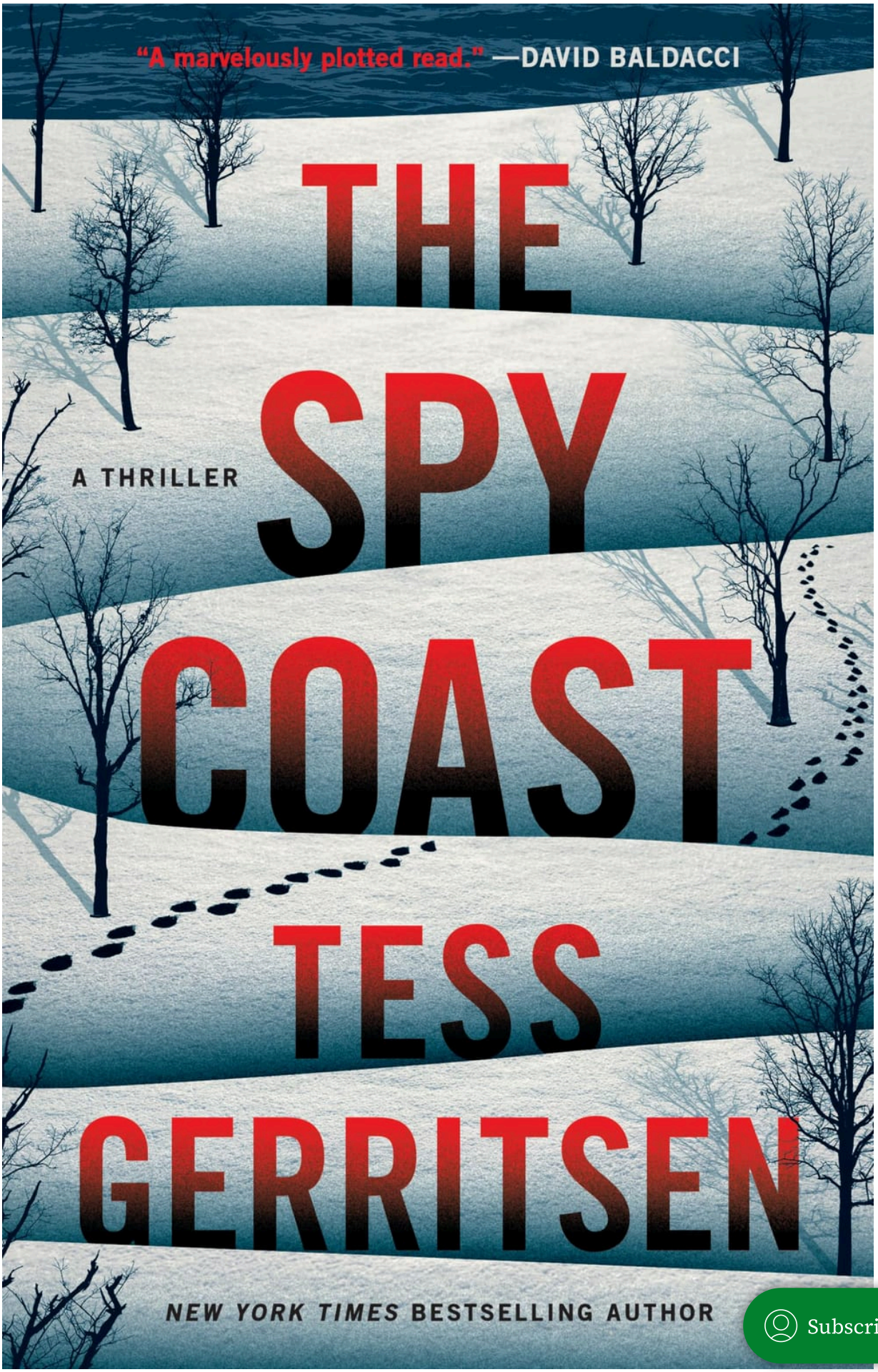
"A marvelously plotted read." —DAVID BALDACCI
THE
SPY
COAST
A THRILLER
TESS
GERRITSEN
NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

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**2) "The Spy Coast" by Tess Gerritsen**

Former spy Maggie Bird came to the seaside village of Purity, Maine, eager to put the past behind her after a mission went tragically wrong. These days, she's living quietly on her chicken farm, still wary of blowback from the events that forced her early retirement.

But when a body turns up in Maggie's driveway, she knows it's a message from former foes who haven't forgotten her. Maggie turns to her local circle of old friends — all retirees from the CIA — to help uncover the truth about who is trying to kill her, and why.

This "Martini Club" of former spies may be retired, but they still have a few useful skills that they're eager to use again, if only to spice up their rather sedate new lives.

*341 pages, published Nov. 1, 2023*

*NOTE: Check out our story from when Gerritsen visited the library in May.*

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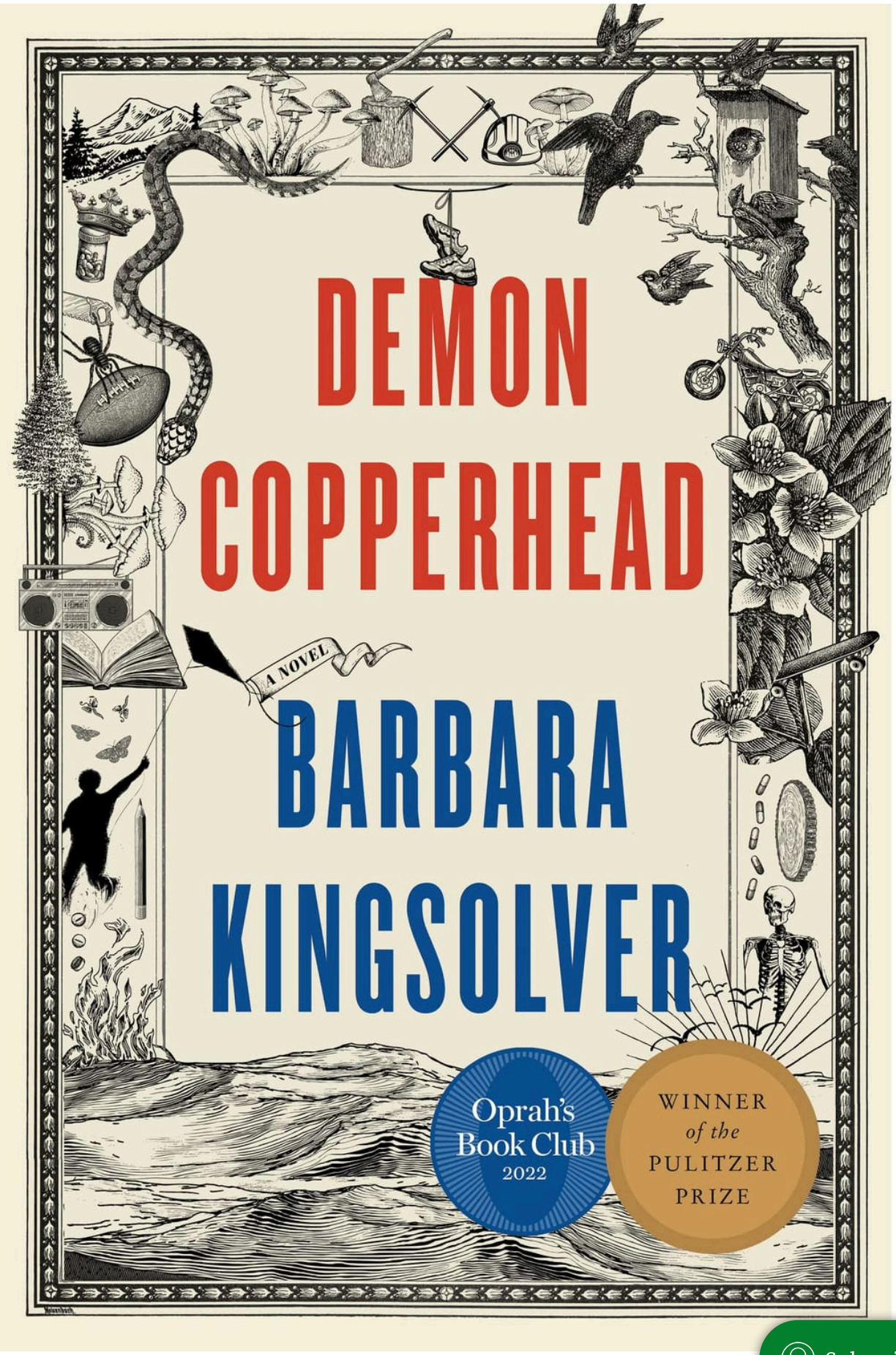


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**3) [“Demon Copperhead” by Barbara Kingsolver]**

Set in the mountains of southern Appalachia, this is the story of a boy born to a teenaged single mother in a single-wide trailer, with no assets beyond his dead father's good looks and copper-colored hair, a caustic wit, and a fierce talent for survival.

In a plot that never pauses for breath, relayed in his own unsparing voice, he braves the modern perils of foster care, child labor, derelict schools, athletic success, addiction, disastrous loves, and crushing losses.

Through all of it, he reckons with his own invisibility in a popular culture where even the superheroes have abandoned rural people in favor of cities.

*560 pages, published Oct. 18, 2022*

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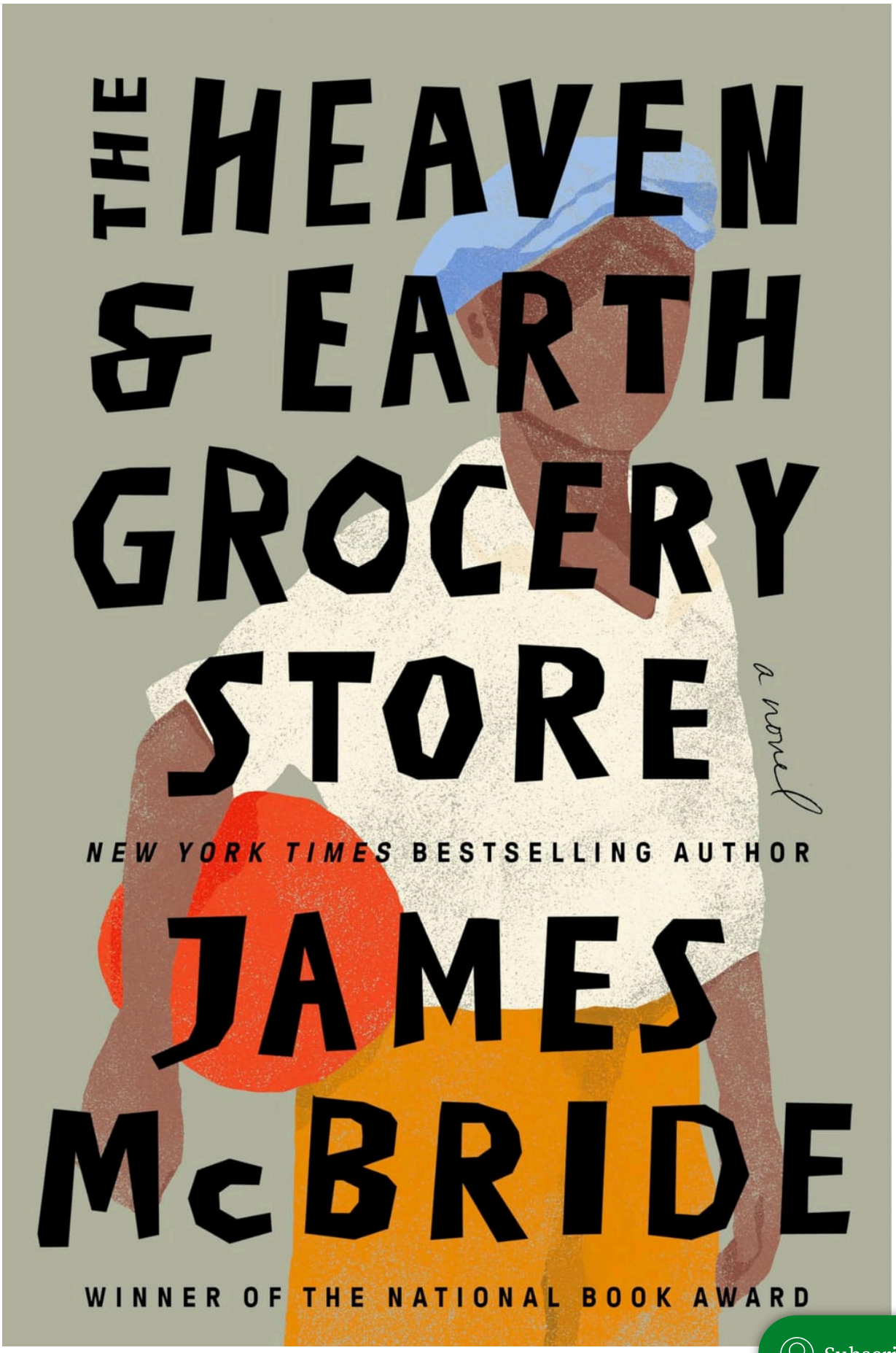


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**4) [“The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store” by James McBride]**

In 1972, when workers in Pottstown, Pennsylvania, were digging the foundations for a new housing development, the last thing they expected to uncover was a human skeleton.

Who the skeleton was and how it got buried there were just two of the long-held secrets that had been kept for decades by the residents of Chicken Hill, the dilapidated neighborhood where immigrant Jews and African Americans lived side by side, sharing ambitions and sorrows.

Chicken Hill was where Moshe and Chona Ludlow lived when Chona ran the Heaven & Earth Grocery Store, which served the neighborhood's quirky collection of blacks and European immigrants, helped by her husband, Moshe, a Romanian-born theater owner who integrated the town's first dance hall.

When the state came looking for a deaf black child, claiming that the boy needed to be institutionalized, Chicken Hill's residents — roused by Chona's kindness and the courage of a local black worker named Nate Timblin — banded together to keep the boy safe.

As the novel unfolds, it becomes clear how much the people of Chicken Hill have to struggle to survive at the margins of white Christian America and how damaging bigotry, hypocrisy, and deceit can be to a community.

When the truth is revealed about the skeleton, the boy, and the part the town's establishment played in both, McBride shows that it is love and community — heaven and earth — that ultimately sustain us.

*385 pages, published Aug. 8, 2023*

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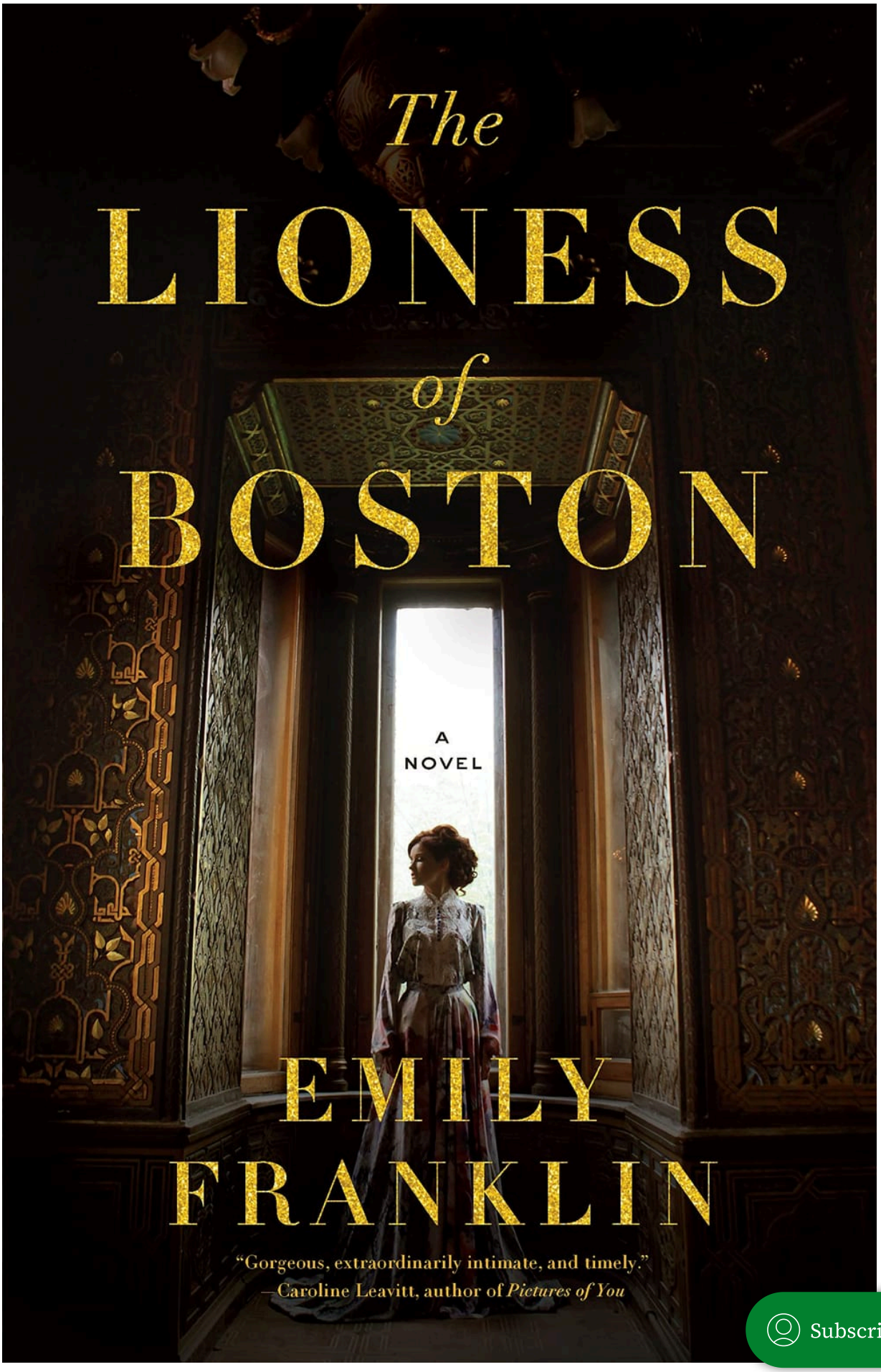
The
LIONESS
of
BOSTON
A
NOVEL
EMILY
FRANKLIN
"Gorgeous, extraordinarily intimate, and timely."
—Caroline Leavitt, author of Pictures of You

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**5) "The Lioness of Boston" by Emily Franklin**

By the time Isabella Stewart Gardner opened her Italian palazzo-style home as a museum in 1903 to showcase her collection of old masters, antiques, and objects d'art, she was already well-known for scandalizing Boston's polite society.

But when Isabella first arrived in Boston in 1861, she was twenty years old, newly married to a wealthy trader, and unsure of herself. Puzzled by the frosty reception she received from stuffy bluebloods, she strived to fit in.

After two devastating tragedies and rejection from upper-society, Isabella discovered her spirit and cast off expectations.

"The Lioness of Boston" is a portrait of what society expected a woman's life to be, shattered by a courageous soul who rebelled and was determined to live on her own terms.

*356 pages, published April 11, 2023*

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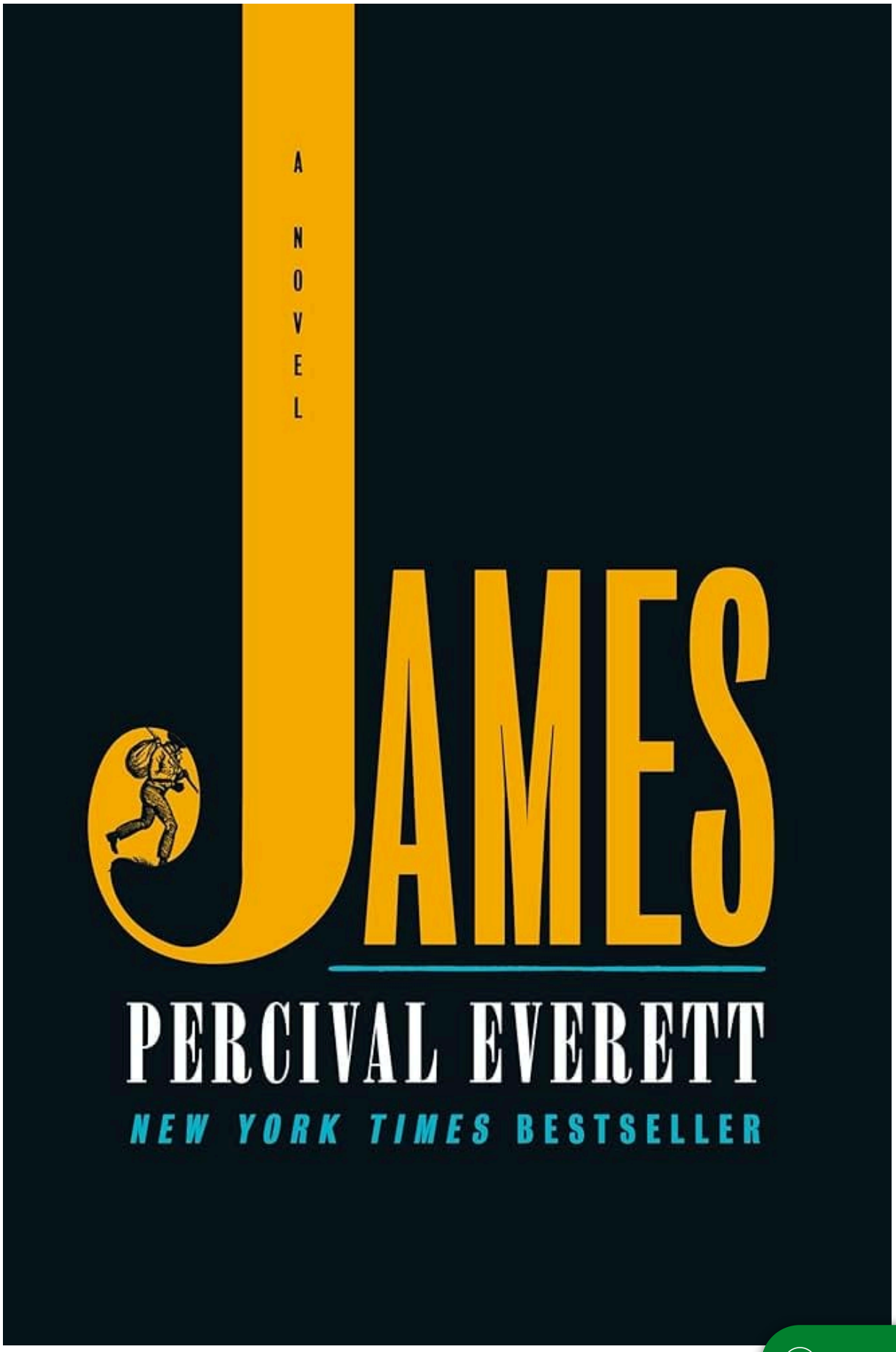


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**6) [“James” by Percival Everett]**

A brilliant reimagining of “Adventures of Huckleberry Finn” by Mark Twain — both harrowing and ferociously funny — told from the enslaved Jim’s point of view

Brimming with the electrifying humor and lacerating observations that have made Everett a literary icon, this brilliant and tender novel radically illuminates Jim’s agency, intelligence, and compassion as never before.

“James” is destined to be a major publishing event and a cornerstone of 21st-century American literature.

*303 pages, published March 19, 2024*

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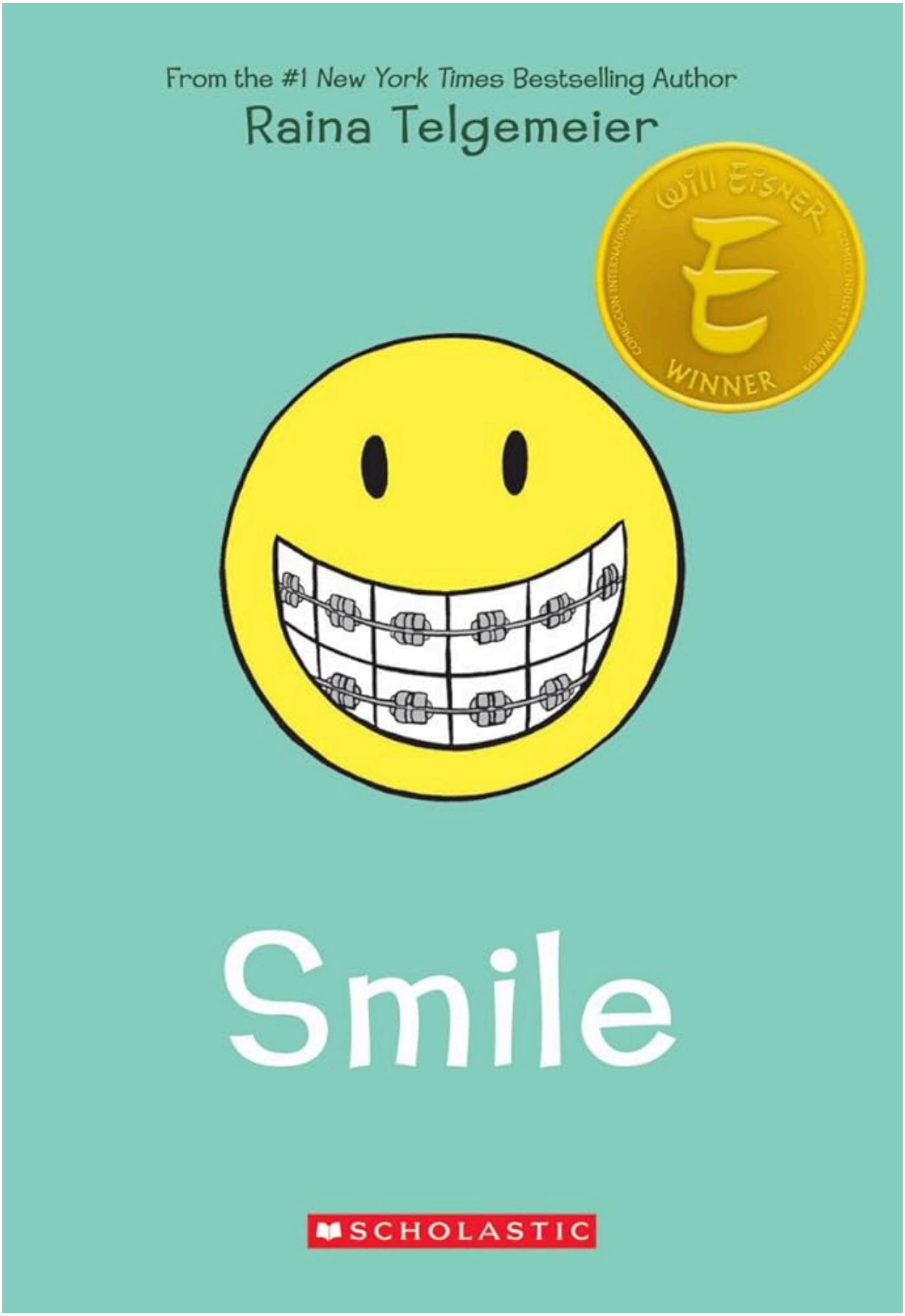


**7) [“Smile” by Raina Telgemeier]**

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Raina just wants to be a normal sixth grader. But one night after Girl Scouts she trips and falls, severely injuring her two front teeth, and what follows is a long and frustrating journey with on-again, off-again braces, surgery, embarrassing headgear, and even a retainer with fake teeth attached.

And on top of all that, there's still more to deal with: a major earthquake, boy confusion, and friends who turn out to be not so friendly.

This coming-of-age true story is sure to resonate with anyone who has ever been in middle school, and especially those who have ever had a bit of their own dental drama.

*214 pages, published July 12, 2009*

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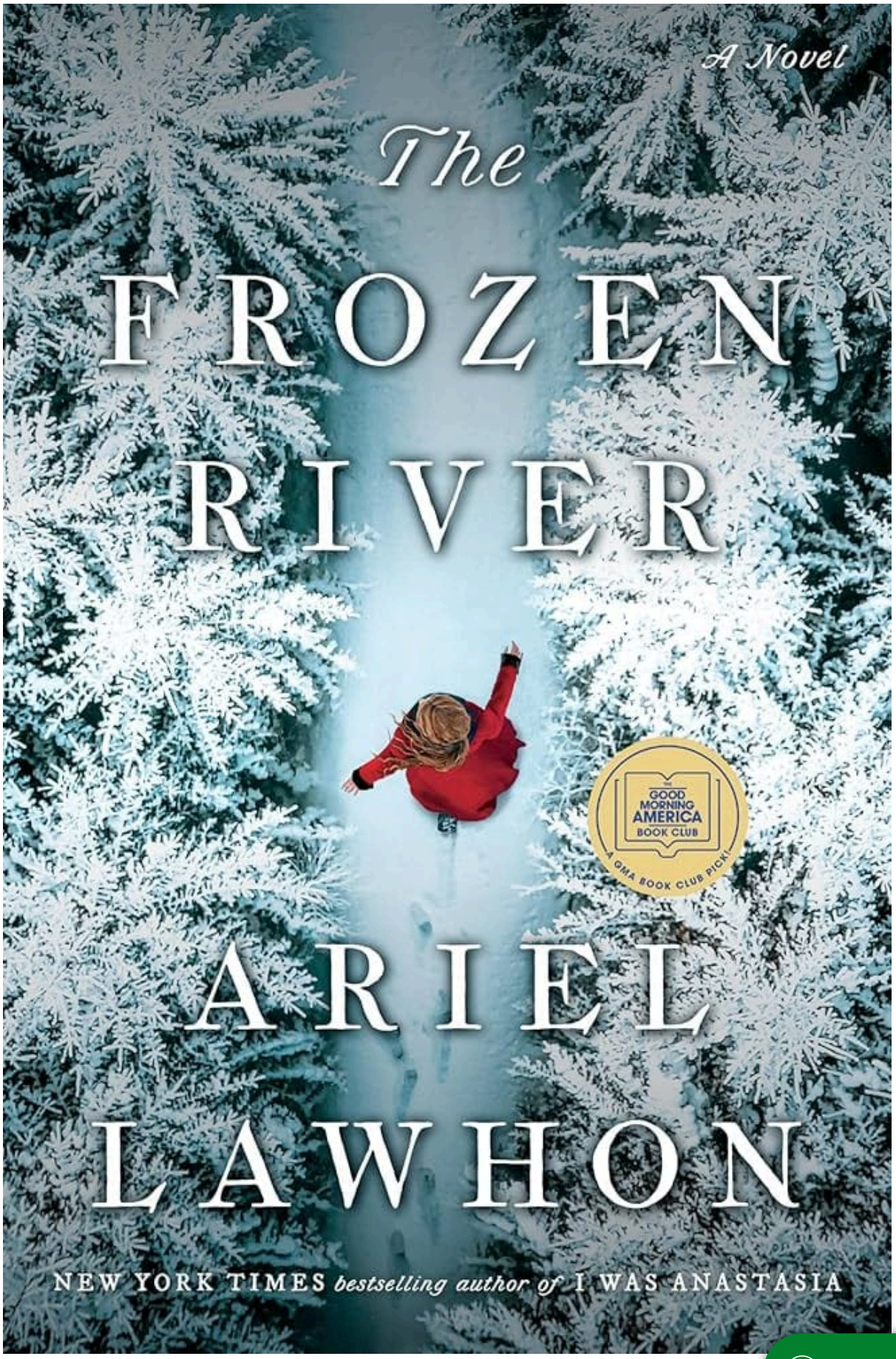


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**8) [“The Frozen River” by Ariel Lawhon]**

A gripping historical mystery inspired by the life and diary of Martha Ballard, a renowned 18th-century midwife who defied the legal system and wrote herself into American history.

Clever, layered, and subversive, Ariel Lawhon's newest offering introduces an unsung heroine who refused to accept anything less than justice at a time when women were considered best seen and not heard.

"The Frozen River" is a thrilling, tense, and tender story about a remarkable woman who left an unparalleled legacy yet remains nearly forgotten to this day.

*432 pages, published Dec. 5, 2023*

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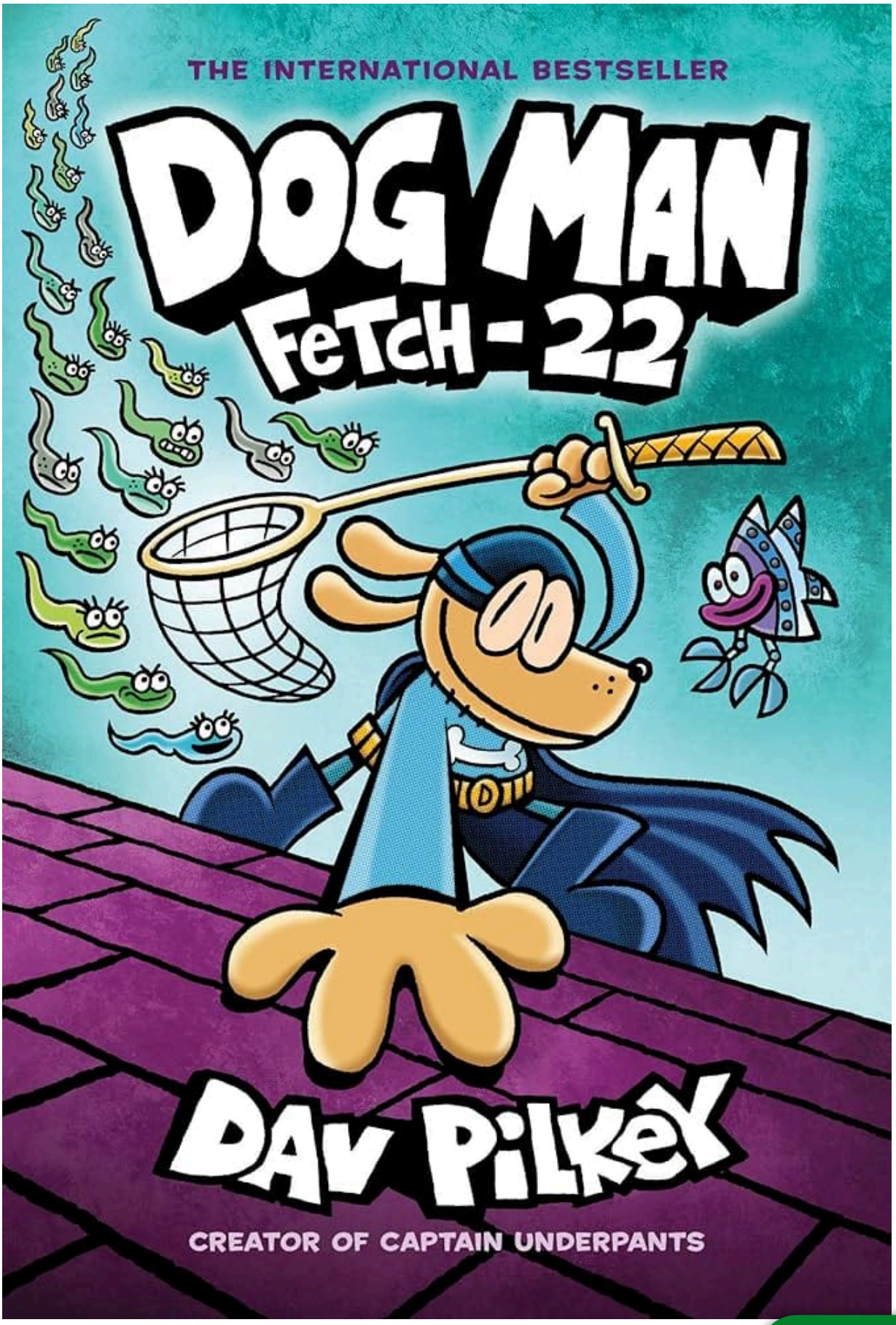


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**9) [“Dog Man: Fetch-22” by Dav Pilkey]**

Li'l Petey gets caught in some family drama in the eighth Dog Man book from worldwide bestselling author and artist Dav Pilkey.

Petey the Cat is out of jail, and he has a brand-new lease on life. While Petey's reevaluated what matters most, Li'l Petey is struggling to find the good in the world.

Can Petey and Dog Man stop fighting like cats and dogs long enough to put their paws together and work as a team? They need each other now more than ever.

*240 pages, published Dec. 10, 2019*

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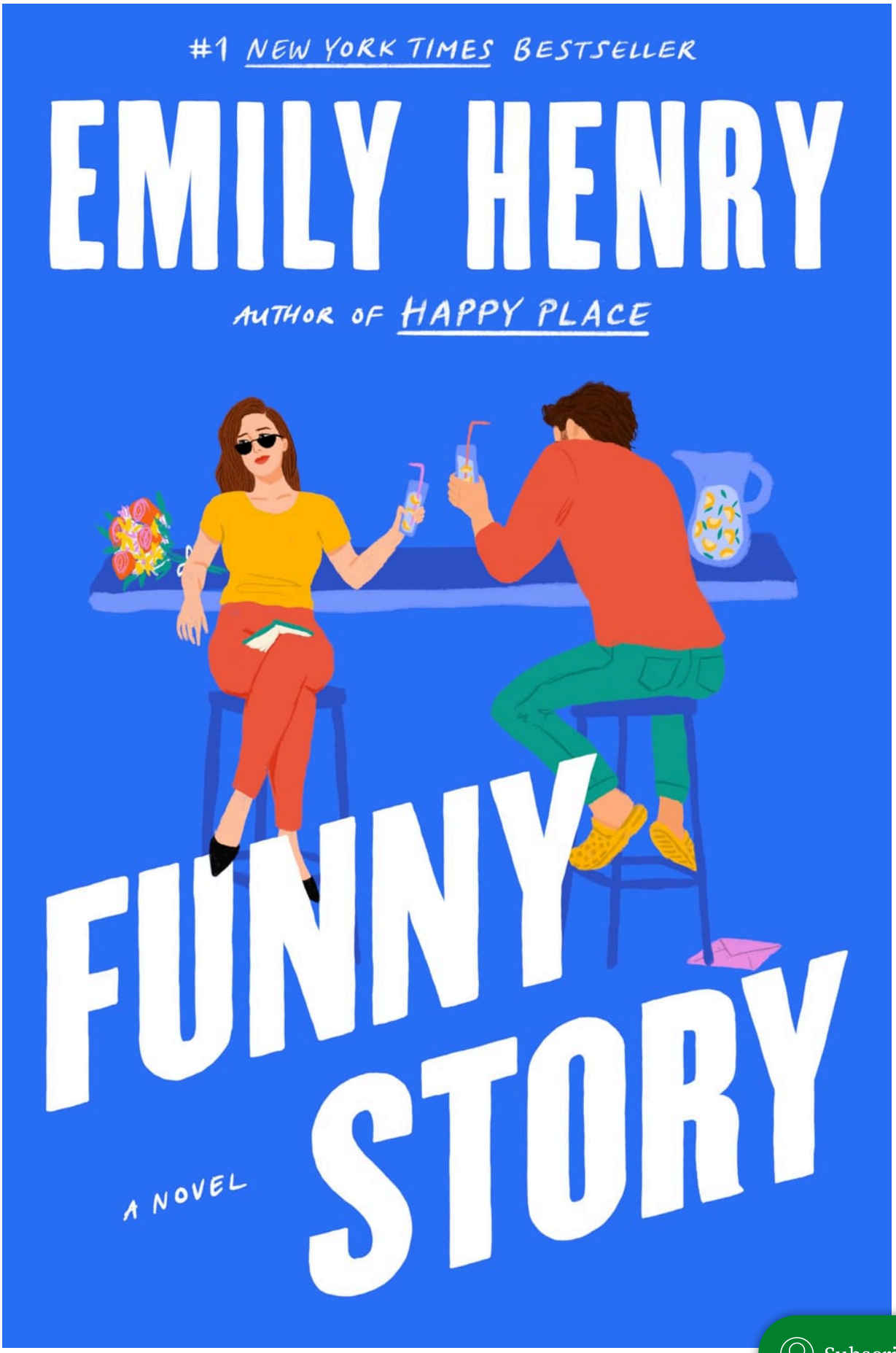


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**10) [“Funny Story” by Emily Henry]**

Daphne always loved the way her fiancé, Peter, told their story. How they met (on a blustery day), fell in love (over an errant hat), and moved back to his lakeside hometown to begin their life together. He really was good at telling it… right up until the moment he realized he was actually in love with his childhood best friend Petra.

Which is how Daphne begins her new story: stranded in beautiful Waning Bay, Michigan, without friends or family but with a dream job as a children's librarian (that barely pays the bills), and proposing to be roommates with the only person who could possibly understand her predicament: Petra's ex, Miles Nowak.

Scruffy and chaotic—with a penchant for taking solace in the sounds of heart break love ballads—Miles is exactly the opposite of practical, buttoned-up

Daphne, whose coworkers know so little about her they have a running bet that she's either FBI or in witness protection. The roommates mainly avoid one another, until one day, while drowning their sorrows, they form a tenuous friendship and a plan. If said plan also involves posting deliberately misleading photos of their summer adventures together, well, who could blame them?

But it's all just for show, of course, because there's no way Daphne would actually start her new chapter by falling in love with her ex-fiancé's new fiancée's ex… right?

*400 pages, published April 23, 2024*

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**Books at the Movies**

And what was the most requested/checked out DVD in 2024? Not surprising it was the Academy Award-winning "Oppenheimer," a 2023 epic biographical drama film written, produced, and directed by Christopher Nolan.

It follows the life of J. Robert Oppenheimer, the American theoretical physicist who helped develop the first nuclear weapons during World War II.

The movie is based on the 2005 biography "American Prometheus" by Kai Bird and Martin J. Sherwin.

First published April 5, 2005, the book is 721 pages long.

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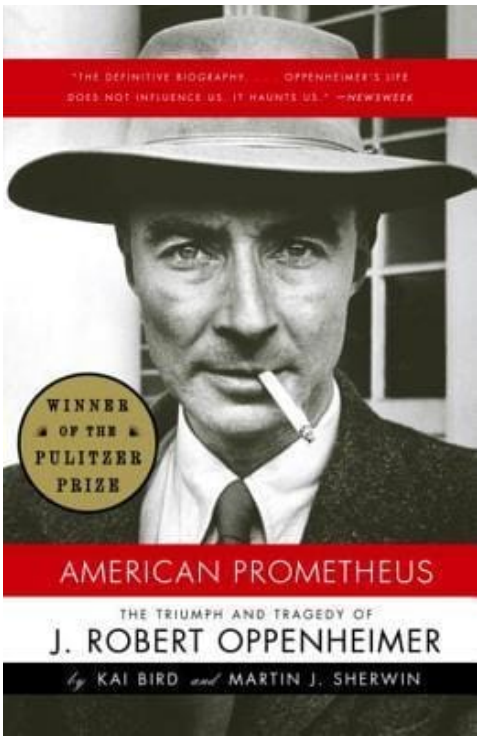


The movie won seven Academy Awards, including Best Picture, Best Director, Best Actor, and Best Supporting Actor. It also won five Golden Globe Awards (including Best Motion Picture – Drama) and seven British Academy Film Awards (including Best Film), and was named one of the top 10 films of 2023 by the National Board of Review and the American Film Institute.

It has been named one of the greatest films of the 2020s and the 21st century.

*Book summaries provided by Good Reads.*

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March 4, 2026

FEATURES

## Celebrating Black history and culture with art, reflection, and community

The following was submitted by the Network for Social Justice: The Winchester community came together last week at the Griffin Museum of Photography for the inaugural Black History and Culture Celebration, an evening filled with music, student creativity, and powerful messages about equity, unity, and the enduring legacy of Black

March 3, 2026

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## Winchester residents share more snow photos

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## Winchester Commun School set to expand, upgrade

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Well, Winchester, we made it through the weekend with only a coating of snow that amounted to nothing on Sunday afternoon. But during the Feb. 22-23 blizzard, Winchester News once again asked residents to send their snow photos. And here is what we received! Solmaz Amirnazmi said her daughters and

NELL ESCOBAR COAKLEY | STAFF WRITER
March 2, 2026

The big events in Winchester Community Music School always take place in Nichols Performance Hall. With the school and its performances' growing in popularity, the hall and many of its amenities are due for an upgrade. The performance hall is one of the main areas that the school seeks to

TAVISHI CHATTOPADHYAY | CORRESPONDENT
February 26, 2026

# Latest

EVENTS

## Celebrate Women's History Month with Girls Leading Change

The following was submitted by the Network for Social Justice: To mark Women's History Month and International Women's Day in 2026, the Network for Social Justice is collaborating with club leaders from Winchester High School and members of the Community Health team from La Colaborativa in Chelsea and

March 4, 2026

NEWS

## Winchester School Committee candidates bring contrasting backgrounds to Thursday forum

Two candidates for Winchester's School Committee will face voters at a forum as the district navigates a new literacy curriculum, budget pressures and questions about student mental health. Heather von Mering and John Bellaire are competing for an open seat on the School Committee, which oversees a budget von

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EVENTS

## Ripley Chapel in Winchester presents ‘Syldason: You Are Welcome Here’

The following was submitted by the Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church: On Friday, March 13, beginning at 7:30 p.m., live in-person and live streamed from the stunning Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church, Winchester, 21 Church St., join in with Syldason, a duo concert featuring Sylvie Zakarian,

March 4, 2026

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